

558 mate object. Bella Coola financiers are always seeking to
556 arrange such undertakings; the potlatch is the culminating point, but the same principle pervades their whole life.

It is to the advantage of the intending donor of a potlatch to become the fictitious husband of as many children as possible. Accordingly he sometimes take the initial step, as is customary for the relatives of the husband in real marriage, but not in ceremonial. In such a case it is necessary for him to offer some inducement, perhaps in the form of one of the few women's names brought to earth in the beginning of time. He approaches a suitable father-in-law, suggesting that at a fictitious marriage he would be willing to give his wife a noble woman's name. If this is agreeable, the rite is carried out accordingly. The wife is in many cases a son of the person to whom the proposal was made; he duly receives a woman's name, the only circumstance under which this is possible. The actual designation will probably be returned through many repurchasings, but the boy has reached an enviable position. In later years he can always silence a person with whom he is quarrelling by saying:

"I need not answer you. You cannot even approach my body, so thickly am I padded with the goods which my father used when he rebought me."

556 Another business transaction of a similar nature is the
601 giving of a small infant to an old person to "hold." This ap-
858 pears to be uncommon, and the only instance about which information was available occurred under the following circumstances:

A man and a woman were married with full ceremony and the best of feelings prevailed between the two families. The wife was several times rebought until she and her relatives had fully maintained their dignity, in fact the relations of the husband felt that they were being out-shone. Then the wife's father died. To mark their sympathy, the husband's family gave the widow one of her daughter's children to "hold." Valuable non-reversible presents were transmitted as "gift

BIRTH, ADOLESCENCE, MARRIAGE

427

blankets" for the child. The advantages to the donors were that they had an opportunity of showing their dignity, and it would always be a mark of pride for the child to be able to boast of the way in which she had been "held."

Ceremonial marriage clearly demonstrates two strong Bella Coola characteristics; namely, the desire publicly to enter into financial undertakings to demonstrate the wealth of the contracting party, and the desire to increase the prestige of children by means of this wealth expended indirectly on their behalf.

EXTRA-MARITAL RELATIONS

Although the Bella Coola do not regard marriage primarily as a means of regulating relations between the sexes, yet the connection between the two is sufficiently close to warrant description in this chapter. A man considers intercourse as one of the normal phenomena of life: by marrying he has exclusive rights to his wife, but few moral restraints deter him from anyone else to whom he can gain access without infringing the prerogatives of some other husband. Moreover, sexual intercourse is not regarded solely as a gratification of desires; it has a significance which can be described, not inaptly, as holy. As already explained, two favourite methods of obtaining success in any undertaking are by preserving lengthy continence or by observing ceremonial chastity. If a young unmarried man or widower should wish to make use of this latter means, he is compelled to have relations with a woman to whom he has no just claims. This is universally recognized, nor is there the slightest odium attached to the man. The only essential is that he neither violate another's wife, nor force a young girl against her will.

At the present time there is great laxity in Bella Coola, a condition which makes it difficult to judge the state of affairs in former times. Every effort was made to obtain satisfactory evidence, and the following was verified and re-verified with the older men.

A wife, properly married with full ceremony, was usually

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